

From sirtfood to keto ultra, what experts think of 2019's top trending diets



LOS ANGELES: Every year, millions of people turn to the internet to research the latest diet trends. Google has released its top trending diets of 2019 and while experts say some of them may be helpful, others are not worth the effort.

Here's how the experts weighed in on five of the top diet searches for this past year.

As the name implies, this diet limits intake to 1,200 calories a day. The Dietary Guidelines Trusted Source for the United States recom-

mend a calorie intake of between 1,600 to 2,400 each day for adult women and 2,000 to 3,000 calories every day for men.

Lauri Y. Wright, PhD, an assistant professor in public health at the University of North Florida, says for those

wanting to lose weight, cutting calories is important.

"Creating a calorie deficit is the key to losing weight. The body then draws on stored fat for the necessary energy needed by the body, which is seen as weight loss," she told Healthline. "We caution about diets that are too restrictive because very low calorie diets can slow your metabolism permanently. Too low is generally thought of as below 1,200 calories for women and 1,500 calories for men."

It's important that those restricting calories still achieve their nutrient needs.

"The diet needs to include all the essential nutrients for health," Wright said. "The lower the calories, the tougher it can be to get all the protein, vitamins, and minerals necessary. We always recommend working with a registered dietitian that can plan the most healthful eating plans to meet your health goals."

Dana Hunnes, PhD, a senior dietitian at the University of California Los Angeles Medical Center, says unless a person has low calorie needs or is under the direct guidance of a medical professional, cutting calories to 1,200 a day is not sustainable in the long term.

"This would definitely be considered more of a crash diet as opposed to a

long-term lifestyle solution and I do not recommend it," she told Healthline. "It is better to lose weight gradually over time and in a manner that is sustainable over the life time... this is not that type of dietary plan and it is not enough. It would likely make your own metabolism slow down since it would not be enough calories."

One of the top diet search terms for 2019 was intermittent fasting.

"In the most basic terms, there are two main versions; time restricted eating (TRE), which is eating during only an 8-hour or 10-hour period or a 5:2 approach where women eat only 500 calories split between two meals, two times a week. Men get 600," said Kristin Kirkpatrick, a registered dietitian and manager of wellness nutrition services at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute in Ohio.

"The benefits are expansive, including longer life, weight loss, and chronic disease risk reduction," she told Healthline.

Hunnes says other possible positives to intermittent fasting include benefits to the gastro-intestinal system by giving it time to rest and lowering inflammation throughout the body.

But fasting isn't appropriate for everyone. "Intermittent fasting is not a good

plan for pregnant women or those with certain health conditions such as diabetes," Wright said. "Additionally, one study found that intermittent fasting can harm heart health. Additionally, after losing weight with intermittent fasting, the body may gain back the weight more quickly because the body viewed fasting as starvation."

Take our free 3-question diet quiz. Our free assessment ranks the best diets for you based on your answers to 3 quick questions. Earlier this year, singer Jennifer Lopez announced she was attempting a 10-day challenge of no carbohydrates and no sugar.

Days into her diet, Lopez encouraged her followers to join her.

However, experts say some carbs are necessary. "Our brains depend on glucose derived from carbohydrates for healthy functioning as do our muscles," said Hunnes. "This type of diet is not healthy. Of course, limiting or avoiding sugar is healthy, but limiting all carbohydrates is not."

"Carbohydrates are critical for health. However, the problem for many people is the type and amount of carbohydrates consumed. Emphasizing complex carbohydrates such as whole grain pastas, rice, beans, vegetables, and fruit rather than simple sugars such as soda and candy is crucial," she said.—AFP

More teens are vaping marijuana, why health officials are alarmed

SANTA MONICA: While teenagers smoking marijuana is nothing new, a fresh report by the federal government says more teens say they're vaping cannabis more frequently.

This is of concern to health experts, considering the thousands of people who have been injured by black market vaping products this year. That's on top of concerns about what regular cannabis consumption can do to the still-developing young mind. According



to the National Institute on Drug Abuse's Monitoring the Future survey report released this week, the rates of high school seniors vaping marijuana at least once in the past year has more than doubled over the past 2 years. Nearly 21 percent of surveyed 12th graders report vaping at least once while 10th graders are close behind at 19 percent. About 7 percent of eighth graders also report vaping marijuana at least once within the past year.

While the report has regularly tracked marijuana and other illicit drug use, this was the first time it measured how many teens vape marijuana daily. It found about 3.5 percent of high school seniors do so and 3 percent of sophomores do as well.

But the report did state that fewer high school seniors say they are using prescription drugs such as opioid pain relievers like Vicodin and the ADHD medication Adderall.

"We are heartened to see the continuing decline in the use of many drugs, particularly non-medical use of prescription opioids," Dr. Nora Volkow, the director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, said in a statement. "However, teens are clearly attracted to vaping products, which are often concentrated amounts of drugs disguised as electronic gadgets. Their growing popularity threatens to undo years of progress protecting the health of adolescents in the U.S."

Besides vaping marijuana, more teens report vaping nicotine, with nearly 12 percent saying they did so daily.

They listed their top reasons for nicotine vaping as flavor, experimentation, social reasons, and simply "to feel good."

In addition, the number of high school seniors who say they vape because they're addicted more than doubled to above 8 percent.

"It is important to note that not all teens know what is in the products they are vaping," the report says.

Dr. Osita Onugha is an assistant professor of thoracic surgical oncology and director of the Surgical Innovation Lab at John Wayne Cancer Institute at Providence Saint John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California.

He says that while vaping is a relatively new technology that was initially marketed to help with smoking cessation, it's since taken on a different life.

"It is now being marketed to elementary and high school kids as a way of making smoking 'cool,'" Onugha told Healthline.

Teen use of marijuana is concerning to health experts because studies have shown that it can negatively impact the developing brain. While 18 years old may be considered the legal age of adulthood, research points that the human brain continues to develop until the age of 25.

Even though the U.S. government classifies cannabis as a Schedule I Controlled Substance — the strictest classification available — a growing number of states allow residents to purchase and consume different formations of marijuana for either medical or recreational purposes.

That has led to many states adopting a "delay" drug education messaging, meaning they encourage children not to say no to cannabis but to wait until they're older to give it a try.—AFP



CDC issues warning about hard-boiled eggs due to listeria

TEXAS: A multistate outbreak of listeria connected to hard-boiled eggs produced by Almark Foods is currently being investigated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). People in Florida, Maine, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Texas have gotten sick. According to the CDC, 4 people have been hospitalized so far, and there has been one death in Texas.

"Interviews with ill people and laboratory evidence indicate that bulk, fresh hard-boiled eggs produced by Almark Foods of Gainesville, Ga., are a likely source of this outbreak. These eggs were packaged in plastic pails and sold under various brand names nationwide to food service operators, including grocery stores and restaurants," the CDC said in a statement.

Not a product you would find on store shelves

These are hard-boiled, peeled eggs that were packaged in plastic pails and sold nationwide to food service operators and restaurants.

A spokesperson for Almark

told Healthline it's important to remember that the eggs in question "are sold to restaurants and similar businesses in plastic pails. Consumers would not find the affected product on supermarket shelves. While it is a serious situation, people need to know that this isn't a product they would be purchasing directly."

In the outbreak announcement, the CDC referenced an inspection conducted at the Almark production plant that was performed by the FDA. That inspection was described in a warning letter sent by the FDA to Almark in July.

The letter says that the outbreak strain of listeria was found in two locations at the plant, one from a food contact surface and another from the peeling room floor.

According to the warning letter, "Based on FDA's analytical results for the environmental sample collected during the inspection, we determined that your food products are adulterated within the meaning of section 402(a)(4) of Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the Act) [21 U.S.C. §342 (a)(4)], in that they were prepared, packed, or held under insanitary conditions

whereby they may have been rendered injurious to health."

In the same letter, the FDA warns that consuming foods contaminated with listeria can lead to a severe and even life-threatening illness called listeriosis.

The FDA added that this infection is a major public health concern due to "the severity of the disease, its high case-fatality rate, its long incubation time, and its tendency to affect individuals with underlying conditions."

It's a foodborne infection

"Listeria is one of the foodborne illnesses," said Dr. Julie Mangino, a specialist in infectious disease at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus, Ohio. "The symptoms include fever, muscle aches, nausea, and diarrhea," she said. "Sometimes the listeria bug can get into the brain and cause a symptom of meningitis whereby you can get headaches, confusion, and issues with your balance."

While this type of infection is treatable with antibiotics, experts advise you go to the nearest emergency room if you experience:

"The people who are most at risk are people who are pregnant,

newborns less than a year old, people over 65 years old, and those who have impaired immune systems," said Mangino.

"You can have impaired immune system because of cancer chemotherapy, dialysis, immune suppressive medications like steroids, or immune modulators, so they can make your immune system suppressed and then you're at higher risk for acquiring the infection," she continued.

If you fall into one of these categories, the CDC advises that you throw away any store-bought hard-boiled eggs or products containing hard-boiled eggs, such as egg salad.

If you do have these products at home, don't eat them. They should be thrown out, no matter where you bought them or the expiration date.

The CDC recommends washing and sanitizing drawers or shelves in refrigerators and freezers where these products were kept. The agency has also said practicing basic food prep awareness could prevent listeria infection. This includes washing your hands well before and after handling food and cooking food thor-

Inflammatory marker could be early warning for dementia

NEW YORK: A new study has found a blood plasma linked to inflammation that could be a warning signal for certain dementias. Could it pave the way for low cost screening?

An inflammation marker in the blood could help predict dementia. Every 65 seconds, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer's disease.

In fact, around 5.8 million people in the U.S. live with the condition, which can impact a person's ability to think, speak, remember, relate to others, and perform everyday tasks.

Dementia is one of the world's fastest-growing causes of death, topping breast cancer and prostate cancer together as the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S.

Dementia is an umbrella term referring to a number of conditions that result from abnormal brain changes that affect the ability to think. It has a number of potential causes.

Alzheimer's is the most common form of dementia, followed by vascular dementia, which stems from microscopic bleeding and blood vessel blockage in the brain. Other causes include vitamin deficiency and thyroid problems.

"Dementia is a complex syndrome often resulting from numerous causes," lead study author Dr. Matthew Pase — of the Florey Institute for Neuroscience and Mental Health in Melbourne, Australia — told Medical News Today.

The study, which appears in the journal *Neurology*, set out to test the link between an inflammatory marker in blood (sCD14) and incident dementia. The hope is that these biomarkers would ultimately pave the way to predicting dementia.

"In addition to biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease (i.e., amyloid and tau), biomarkers of inflammation and neuronal injury may help improve the prediction of clinical dementia," said Dr. Pase.

What excited the researchers was the potential to assess dementia risk in advance by tapping into cost effective blood-based biomarkers to pave the way for intervention ahead of disease development, possibly changing the course of someone's life.

"The development of cost effective blood biomarkers for dementia could improve clinical research and practice by permitting widespread low cost screening and [assisting] in identifying at risk participants for dementia prevention trials," said Dr. Pase.

"Biomarkers of neural inflammation, such as sCD14, are promising candidates to study since inflammation appears to be a common pathway triggered by a variety of mechanisms leading to dementia."

"Injury to the brain that predisposes [it] to dementia, whether due to vascular brain injury, Alzheimer's proteinopathy, or head trauma, is accompanied by a neuroinflammatory response."

However, scientists do not fully understand the role of inflammation in different types of dementia.

Building on prior research in animals that suggested that sCD14 helps regulate the brain's inflammatory response, researchers set out to investigate its use as a biomarker for the risk of cognitive decline and dementia. The new research, which drew from two community-based studies, looked at more than 4,700 participants. In one study, their average age was 69, and in the other, it was 72. In both studies, the researchers measured the plasma sCD14 in the participants' blood upfront. In one study, they performed a brain MRI and cognitive tests within the first year and a second round of tests after seven years.—AFP

Flu season 2019: Cases top five million, infections may increase over the holidays

LONDON: The flu got an earlier start than usual this year, and a strain that's particularly harsh among children (influenza B/Victoria viruses) is spreading rapidly across the country.

New estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predict there've been up to 5.3 million cases of the flu, between 32,000 to 57,000 flu-related hospitalizations, and nearly 1,800 to 4,500 deaths — 19 of which were children.

And new research from the University of Arizona suggests that whatever strain you first picked up as a child will determine how well your immune system fights future flu infections — and may explain why different age groups are more affected by certain strains. (For example, if you first encountered the B/Victoria strain as a child, you might have an easier time fighting it than those

who initially dealt with an A strain).

Now, some health experts predict another wave of the flu is coming just in time for the holidays.

That's not too much of a shock, though, as we frequently see an uptick in flu cases Trusted Source during the holiday season — especially of the influenza A variety.

For one, people are more likely to get sick in cold weather — viruses such as the flu can get stronger in low humidity and cold temperatures, and at the same time, our immune system weakens.

On top of that, people spend more time inside with family members and friends during the holiday season, allowing viruses to spread easily in close quarters.

Not to mention, tons of people travel over the holidays, and the flu virus can pass quickly from person to person on planes and trains.

Sick and going to a holiday party?

If you come down with the flu and have plans to be around family during the holidays, there are a few ways to prevent the virus from infecting your entire family tree.

"The first line of defense is to encourage those at-risk persons, and their family members [and] friends, to get their own flu vaccines," said Dr. David Mushatt, an infectious disease specialist and section chief of infectious diseases at Tulane University.

If you need to cough or sneeze, be sure to do so into a tissue or your sleeve to prevent the virus from spreading into the air. The flu virus, by the way, can land on a surface and stay infectious for hours.

Wearing a mask and keeping a distance from others, and washing your hands frequently, can cut the chances you'll spread the virus around.—AFP

